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FACT SHEET

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2006–2007 Ralph N. Kleps Award Recipient: Collaborative Information Services (IS) Program, Superior Courts of Butte and Glenn Counties

An intercounty information services collaboration that allows a small court to access the technical resources and support of a larger court. The two courts now share the use of trusted domains and are connected by a dedicated T1 communication line. The Superior Court of Butte County hosts the Superior Court of Glenn County's accounting system and Web site and serves as Glenn's Internet service provider (ISP) and Internet mail relay. As a help desk "customer," Glenn also is afforded a cafeteria-style array of services from the IS Support Center.

Why This Program Is Innovative

It utilizes a comprehensive court-to-court IS support system that incorporates a formal memorandum of understanding (MOU) to maximize the benefits of public funds. In neighboring counties, the courts use the same business tools and software and are perfectly situated for collaboration. By utilizing shared IS resources and economies of scale, both courts can be supported with a single IS staff.

Problems the Program Was Designed to Address

- Unstable IS infrastructure.
- Need for additional resources to complement existing IS services in lead court.
- Despite having IS needs similar to those of a larger court, the small court's limited IS budget resulted in a lack of qualified IS staff on site.
- The smaller court was forced to contract with outside vendors for basic support services.

Program Goals and Desired Outcomes

- By sharing technology resources and management services, allow both courts to leverage and maximize IS funding and receive high-quality IS support services.
- Provide top-quality IS support to a smaller court that previously received only costly, yet inadequate, IS services from vendors.
- Provide local ancillary services that will augment and support future services provided by the California Courts Technology Center.

Butte-Glenn Collaborative Information Services (IS) Program

Actual Program Outcomes and Benefits

- Glenn increased its ability to provide timely, accurate customer service related to data entry and extraction from its case management system.
- Glenn has been able to stabilize its IS infrastructure, standardize systems, improve security, and provide long-term strategic IS planning.
- Positive feedback is received from all IS system users—judges, staff, and the public, and user complaints about system stability and reliability have ceased.
- User satisfaction and productivity have increased.
- Superior Court of Glenn County technology users directly contact the Butte IS support center for IS issue resolution any time during business hours.
- Butte enhanced its IS staff utilizing funding provided by Glenn.

How This Program Was Originally Funded

Glenn identified its specific IS needs, equipment that must be maintained, current applications in use, and desired goals for their technology needs. Butte identified its technology and human resources availability and skills, feasibility, and suggested objectives it could meet. In December 2001, the courts entered into a MOU, which included a service-level agreement specifying the level of service, service response times, points of contact, and other related deliverables. Based on the agreement, Glenn provided funding, which came from its annual grant for IS staff, to Butte to hire an additional IS staff member.

Ongoing Budget and Staffing Impacts

The Court IS and Fiscal Services Director oversees the program, which is staffed with one IS manager and four IS analysts. Through deployment of the help-desk model and the ability to remotely solve 80 percent of IS requests, Butte provides comprehensive IS support to both courts without significantly increasing staff costs.

How the Program Is Sustained

- Continuous dialogue between partners to foster a high level of trust.
- Regular feedback regarding needs, observations, and the quality of service.
- Ongoing, face-to-face dialogue between Butte IS staff and the Glenn court.
- Continuous evaluation of the successes and needs of the program.
- Online user customer service satisfaction surveys.
- Documenting system stability.
- Monthly status reports to both courts' executive officers.

Recommendations for Courts Wanting to Replicate This Program

Have the following things already in place in the court that will provide the support:

- Adequate IS technology resources and infrastructure, such as sufficient skilled staff, adequate/safe domains, T1 line, etc.
- A fully operational help-desk model and adequate reporting/accountability.

Contact:

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Additional resources:

Ralph N. Kleps Award information, www.courtinfo.ca.gov/programs/innovations

Superior Court of Butte County's Web site: www.buttecourt.ca.gov